Telework Management Certificate Program

Course #1 "Ten Things I Hate About Telework"

Allan: Hello and welcome to part one of this six course certificate program in Telework Management. In this course, our expert instructors, experts Mika Cross and Javier Inclan from the USDA are joined by renowned author and telework guru Kate Lister of Global Workplace Analytics.

They will talk about common myths and misperceptions related to Telework and will share evidence of the advantages of telework to business and employees.

To complete this program and earn your certificate, you must finish all 6 courses and score at least 80% on the test questions associated with each course. You may take a course as often as you like. All courses are free of charge, however, should you wish to earn your Program Certification with credits and CEUs, you will be required to pay a $99 administrative fee.

Good luck and good learning.

This course and most others offers you additional resources related to the materials covered. To access them, click on the attachments folder in your module or, if you are using a mobile device, click on the Paper Clip Icon.

You can also access the notes associated with this presentation by clicking the small question mark at the bottom of the module and choosing notes, if you are using a mobile device, click on the Notes Icon.

Mika is USDA's Work/Life and Wellness program director and subject matter expert in human capital workplace strategies.

Kate is president of Global Workplace Analytics, a internationally-recognized consulting and research firm that helps employers and community leaders understand, quantify, and communicate the business case for workplace flexibility and emerging workplace strategies such as telework.

Javier, A former naysayer of Telework, Javier has experience to prove that Telework brings positive benefits to the organization, mission, and its management.

So let's get started, in a moment, we'll we'll launch a short, two minute video outlining some of the benefits of telework to organizations and employees

Telecommuting is good for you and for business. When 5 months pregnant, Melissa Mayer accepted the position of CEO of Yahoo! Family-oriented employees everywhere were hoping her hiring would kick off a work-life balance revolution, however, her recent ban on telecommuting seems like a big step back in time. While Meyer has her reasons, many experts agree that telecommuting is actually good for business.

Here are a handful of the benefits Yahoo! will be missing out on by disallowing telecommuting:

1.   Increased productivity. One Stanford study shows call center employees increased their productivity 13% when allowed to work from home. A study from University of Texas, Austin shows telecommuters work 5-7 hours more than their in-office counterparts. While it's easy to think there are too many distractions on employees working from home, the truth is quite the contrary.

2.   Reduced turnover. The cost of turnover is relative to each company but always considerable. By allowing telecommuting, employees will be happier and less likely to quit. Studies show 73% of telecommuters reported being happy with their employers compared to just 64% of commuters. Allowing employees to telecommute isn't just about working in pyjamas, it shows employees that their managers trust them, boosting esteem and motivation.

3.   Improved Morale/Reduced Stress: Americans hating driving to work. And telecommuting reduces employees' need to spend money on expensive clothes, fuel an more. Plus, there's less stress in preparing for a day of work from home. A study from Pennsylvania State University shows that telecommuters are regularly less stressed and happier than people working in an office.

4.   Saving the World: Allright, saving the world is a tall order but the Consumer Electronics Association did a study that showed telecommuting saves enough energy to power one million homes in the United States for an entire year. Making telecommuting just another way businesses can reduce their carbon footprint.

To watch more videos from the Minute MBA series, check out onlinemba.com

With the recent release of the Office of Personnel Management's annual report to Congress on the status of Telework in the Federal Government, a key theme continues to resonate- no matter what Agency, Executive Department, mission or customer- there is a common denominator. A cultural resistance to change.

So this commonality sparked us to think about developing a course centered around the top 10 things we hear frequently as barriers to telework implementation. These topics really centered around 5 prevalent themes…

Productivity

How will I know they're working?

What I can't reach them when needed?

Teamwork

What happens to our team when some can Telework and others cannot?

We lose the value of face-to-face interaction!

 Accountability

How do I keep them on task and accountable?

Some teleworkers feel they're entitled to do so without approval!

Complexity

How do I demonstrate the value of Telework for my organization?

There are no clear ways to clearly calculate savings and efficiencies!

And

Morale Issues

 Morale between those who Telework and those who cannot suffers.

 Telework is just a soft benefit, why does it really matter?

Most of the misperceptions about productivity while Teleworking often stem from poor communication between managers and employees, lack of trust and a need for stronger performance measures. Funny story- just last year, JC Penney had a significant issue with employee productivity, when their 4,800 employees working from the headquarters office in Texas were found to have downloaded more than FIVE MILLION YOUTUBE Videos in just one month, taking up more than 35% of the entire company's bandwidth. Think about that, it averages to over 50 videos of cute cats and babies laughing at each other EACH DAY! Needless to say there were significant reductions in staff in the months to follow…

Study after study debunks this myth.

Some is common sense:

Fewer meetings and interruptions

Less noise

Feeling trusted and therefore more engaged

The ability to Work when you are most effective

Saving commute time, which in many cities, like DC, can eat up two or three hours every day

The Synthesis of research shows productivity increases of between 15-55%

There are lots of examples in some of our the white papers attached to this course

Probably the biggest study is from

Brigham Young University and IBM which looked at 24k IBM employees/ in 75 countries,

It Measured how long people could work without work-life conflict.

For Office workers the breaking point was 38 hours per week.

 For Those with the option to telecommute, it was 57 hours

        a pretty significant 19 hour difference

-80 percent of IBM managers agree that productivity increases in a flexible environment.

The U.S. Air Force's Central Adjudication Facility where security clearances are big, has

-95% of employees Teleworking. They have reported a 55% increase in productivity

The Apollo Group / which is a For-Profit Educator, like Univ of Phoenix has found

+34% higher productivity across 16 objective work performance indicators as a result of its integrated Telework program.

Employees saved an average of 49 minutes a day due to fewer distractions and interruptions.

And Call Centers are low hanging fruit

AtAlpine Access, the 3,000 employees are all virtual, that resulted in a 90% reduction customer complaints

At British Telecom, teleworkers answer 20 percent more calls

 At AMEX – teleworkers answer 26% more calls and have 43% higher sales

And there are Lots of others

It's True that measuring productivity is not as straight-forward with information workers, but when you are managing by results, something we'll be talking about here in a bit, it's all about whether someone is doing their job successfully and how you determine that is no different whether they're in the same building or miles away.

To be more specific, some objective measures might be, percentage of on-time projects, percentage of customer complaints, project backlog, time to decision, self-assessment/peer assessment/manager assessment, reduced downtime, reduced absenteeism, reduced turnover, coop downtime, employee morale/engagement, team cohesion, etc.

It's very important to have baseline measures to compare to after the telecommuting program is put in place or expended, etc.

What we often find is that Supervisors who telework themselves, have better trust, confidence and ability in managing their employees who also telework. With regards to productivity, New skill sets are learned when adopting new ways of working. Supervisors learn to better manage in a flexible, supportive and modern workplace while employees learn the value of effective communication, team work and use of technology.

No commute means more time to focus, less stress means better quality work.

But it's a Shared Responsibility: Both parties are responsible for success in making the arrangement work. Telecommuting often Strengthens communication between employee and supervisor.

Managing work should not be any different than an employee working in a cubicle 20 feet away.

If, for example, an employee does not respond when their supervisor phones or emails them, the supervisor needs to call them in, discuss the employee's responsibilities, and remind the employee about the signed Telework agreement and that it can be revoked if the situation does not change

Now let's talk Team Work. Traditionally , Telework (formerly known as Flexiplace) for those of us who have been around long enough to see Telework develop in government) was traditionally thought of as a way to work in isolation- in an environment free from distractions, interruptions and the like. But with the use of common technology, email, mobile phones, video and teleconferencing- teleworkers are often more connected with teams and accessible quicker, than others.

Some of the biggest concerns management voices are around the fear that team cohesion, collaboration and customer service can be compromised with the lack of frequent face-to face interaction.

MySQL – is the world's largest open source database …

> -it has employees on every continent except Antarctica.

> - all of them are remote

> - It could never have grown to level of success without the remote work model

84% of managers at The Apollo Group at university of phoenix reported remote work had no negative impact on teamwork or cohesion.

Repeated research has shown:

That More than 10 feet away, communication drops off significantly.

And At 50 ft, you might as well be in another building or country

Teamwork in telework may be Different, but it's not difficult. Global birthday parties. Virtual outings. Virtual water coolers and other tactics can help build cohesiveness in virtual teams.

But is Teamwork is compromised when some of the team can Telework and others cannot. Members feel they have to cover down to do things on the job that cannot be done via Telework, and so there may be morale issues that affect team cohesion.

But the supervisor is responsible to determine what positions, and what personnel, are able to Telework. Employees cannot be treated differently, or given additional responsibilities to "cover down", based on where they work. Meetings need to be scheduled ahead of time to ensure participation via telephone, computer, etc.

Without face-to-face interaction, we might lose some team integrity, knowledge sharing and collaboration.

But it is work-specific. Some teams may not be able to Telework effectively based on their job functions.

Managers often cite accountability as a key reason for restricting telework. Why? Because in the past, out of sight meant out of mind. Sometimes there is a perception that teleworkers have a sense of entitlement, that often they feel they can arbitrarily change their schedules, work hours or telework

days without approval. Without clear expectations, a well written agreement and communication between both telework and manager about the Telework arrangement, this could be the case.

So There needs to be accountability across the board, regardless of where employees work

Employees admit to wasting 2 hours a day not including lunch and schedule breaks – that's when they are in the office!

I love what Sharon Wall, a regional GSA administrator has to say on the subject of accountability. "Telework doesn't create management problems, it reveals them." Whether your people are 5 feet, 5 miles, or 5 time zones away, you have no way of knowing whether or not they are working unless you are managing by results -- that means establishing goals and holding them responsible for meeting them.

Telework forces managers to actually manage, vs. babysit.

While Telework certainly cannot be a one-size fits all program, there is a lot of flexibility that can be introduced when developing arrangements for remote work. Consider that even positions that require security clearances, or access to specialized equipment may have some form of administrative duties, mandatory training, performance work or research that could be done from an alternate work location. In those instances, Telework, even for a portion of a work day, can result in employees being better prepared to work during times when the traditional office may be closed due to inclement weather or other disruption.

Some cite fiscal restraints as a reason or not adopting viable telework programs in their organizations, especially when organizations are looking to work more efficiently and effectively

When organizations focus on the lack of funding for new technology, tools and resources, they may overlook the basics that may already be in place and available to support telework. Things as basic as call forwarding, remote email access and professional development platforms can, in some organizations, be accessible offsite without government furnished equipment. Cross-leveling surplus or excess equipment may also be an option for some.

In terms of budget, it doesn't have to be expensive. I've had conversations with many high level government Telework leaders who have built robust Telework programs on a shoestring. Having said that, another study and subsequent paper on government Telework showed that training and technology posed significant barriers. Training doesn't have to be expensive, but it is essential to success. Technology, on the other hand, does cost money. In many cases, BYOD strategies are picking up the slack. In fact, a minority of private and public sector employers pay for their employee's remote technology. But if agencies expect to compete for talent and effectively achieve their mission, remote access to files, access to collaboration tools, and remote access devices are essential. This is true, btw, regardless of Telework.

Regarding security, 90% of CIOs say they can contain the risks. If you think about it, call centers are probably the highest users of the Telework model and they face some of the highest security risks.

Another benchmark on the complexity issue: We did a study of who teleworks a couple of years. It turns out, nearly half of all US jobs in every industry are compatible with at least part-time Telework; includes industries like construction, agriculture, forestry, etc. In government, that number is likely even higher.

Some argue that Telework only benefits employees- but Telework allows for the reduction of space, therefore saving the government lease costs, utility costs, etc.

And this can be demonstrated in ROI if at a minimum space utilization cost savings are calculated correctly.

So let's talk about morale and work/life issues now. As the Federal government strives to become a model employer and looks ahead to attracting the next generation of Fed workers, Telework can be viewed as a strategic tool for both recruitment and retention of talent. And as the focus broadens to attracting and retaining a highly skilled, diverse and inclusive workforce Telework becomes a meaningful tool for achieving those goals. Agencies looking to increase their scores on the Best Places to Work index understand that a balanced approach to integrating work/life flexibilities such as telework, reap higher satisfaction, engagement and morale scores. There IS a correlation.

Morale between those who Telework and those who cannot suffers only if employees that are able to Telework are not given the opportunity to do so